



# **BASIC 101** BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO **SEO**

(Search Engine Optimization)

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INTERNET MARKETING  
**NINJAS**  
SERVICES, TOOLS & COMMUNITIES

21 Corporate Drive, Suite 200  
Clifton Park, New York 12065  
518-270-0854  
[www.internetmarketingninjas.com](http://www.internetmarketingninjas.com)

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Search Engine Landscape

*“Never stop testing, and your advertising will never stop improving.”*  
David Ogilvy

Search engines change every day, especially those that have the largest infrastructure and budget to improve their technology. Marketers who understand the need for constant testing to improve their performance will fit in very nicely with the main concept of search engine optimization: Deliver the right content to the right people when they are searching for it.

Search engines explore the Internet constantly looking for new content to index and then use an algorithm to rank that content within “organic,” or “free,” search results, unlike directories, which simply gather and list Web pages within categories.

In this e-book, you will discover how the search engines collect and subsequently deliver Web assets (pages, images, videos, etc.) to searchers as well as learn the basic tenets of search engine optimization.

### Marketing Classification



Image source: everydaydigitals.com<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [everydaydigitals.com/heres-what-i-think/2013/1/8/pull-dont-push-marketing-in-new-media](http://everydaydigitals.com/heres-what-i-think/2013/1/8/pull-dont-push-marketing-in-new-media)

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SEO is known as a “pull” marketing mechanism because you use SEO to influence the results someone sees within search engine results pages (SERPs). Some will argue that there is an element of “push,” especially within very competitive spaces, but we’ll cover how to influence people’s clicks (CTR, or click-through rate) later in this book. For now, let’s look at SEO as **a way to drive awareness of your brand and products/services throughout the buyer’s purchase cycle.**

## The Search Engine Landscape

Since the early 2000s, Google has been the undisputed leader in the search engine landscape, commanding greater than 60% of the search share in the U.S. marketplace. Google is proud to brag about this in one of their *universal search results*, which are further detailed later in this e-book:



ComScore reports<sup>2</sup>:

***17.8 billion explicit core searches were conducted in June (2014), with Google Sites ranking first with 12.1 billion. Microsoft Sites ranked second with 3.4 billion searches, followed by Yahoo Sites with 1.7 billion, Ask Network with 378 million, and AOL Inc. with 231 million.***

<sup>2</sup> [www.comscore.com/Insights/Market-Rankings/comScore-Releases-June-2014-US-Search-Engine-Rankings](https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Market-Rankings/comScore-Releases-June-2014-US-Search-Engine-Rankings)

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comScore Explicit Core Search Share Report*			
June 2014 vs. May 2014			
Total U.S. – Home & Work Locations			
Source: comScore qSearch			
Core Search Entity	Explicit Core Search Share (%)		
	May-14	Jun-14	Point Change
Total Explicit Core Search	100.0%	100.0%	N/A
Google Sites	67.6%	67.6%	0.0
Microsoft Sites	18.8%	19.2%	0.4
Yahoo Sites	10.0%	9.8%	-0.2
Ask Network	2.3%	2.1%	-0.2
AOL, Inc.	1.3%	1.3%	0.0

Microsoft's Bing search engine actually powers the organic search results of Yahoo, so SEO practitioners, known by the label of "SEOs," often combine Microsoft and Yahoo's shares, in this case adding up to 29%.

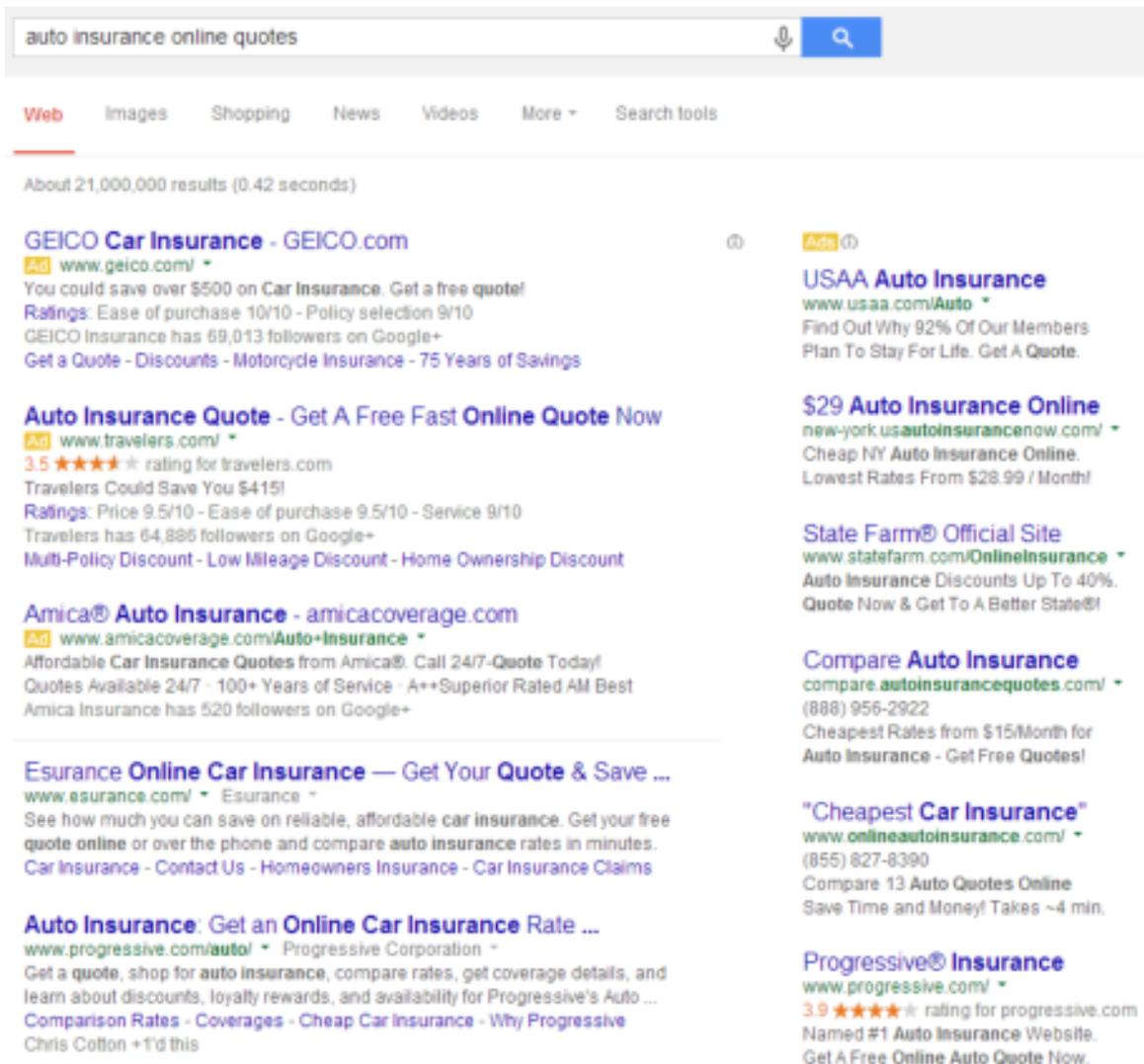
## Effective Marketing Within Search Engines

Google has led the way in terms of technology and prowess in the search engine landscape. Therefore, SEOs should always look to Google for clues as to how to best market to searchers. Google has grown to its size by returning **paid search ads** for most queries, costing the advertisers \$0.05 to as much as \$50 or more each time someone clicks on them. Google also shares these ad units with other publishers, who then share the revenue from the clicks with Google.

**Google's quarterly earnings for Q1 2014 were \$15.4 billion**, up 19% year over year, according to Larry Page, CEO of Google.

The following screenshot shows the difference between paid ad units and "free" organic results:

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The above image shows the paid search results within the red boxes on the top and side. Even though it may seem like trying for the two non-paid spots is likely to be a fruitless effort, research and tenacity will identify terms that have less advertising and are likely closer to the marketer finishing their purchase decision. Looking at a classic marketing funnel, we know that search (both paid and organic) can be a big part of the consumer decision process throughout the cycle:

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**Awareness** – Brand attention as people start to notice your content for broad search terms indicating initial research

**Consideration** – Reinforcement of brand authority for those who started above, plus introduction to more sophisticated or topic-knowledgeable searchers who start here

**Purchase** – Your content has to be here, or you have to hope they search [your brand + product/service]



Google has provided<sup>3</sup> the following as its guiding ideas, in the form of “**The Ten Things They Know to Be True**”:

1. **Focus on the user and all else will follow.**
2. It's best to do one thing really, really well.
3. Fast is better than slow.
4. **Democracy on the Web works.**
5. You don't need to be at your desk to need an answer.
6. You can make money without doing evil.
7. **There's always more information out there.**
8. The need for information crosses all borders.
9. You can be serious without a suit.
10. Great just isn't good enough.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.google.com/about/corporate/company/tenthings.html>

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Therefore, marketers should also focus on these basic tenets when thinking about SEO. It can be boiled down at a high level as follows, with the details introduced through the rest of this e-book:

- 1. Study and understand your market(s), the competitive landscape, and the search terms pertinent to your segment(s).*
- 2. Execute SEO technical fixes to ensure that all of your content is properly indexed as well as to strengthen the topical authority of your content and its appeal within search results.*
- 3. Engage in ongoing marketing to drive authority and buzz to your content from influencers and brand advocates.*

## Final Introductory Thoughts

Remember that even SEO “experts” and “gurus” who have been doing this for years across a number of industries and competitive levels are still learning SEO every day. Constant testing, vigilance, and understanding of search engine and competitive landscape changes are paramount to success.

Use the community to share thoughts and questions about each chapter! Now, let's get into it ...

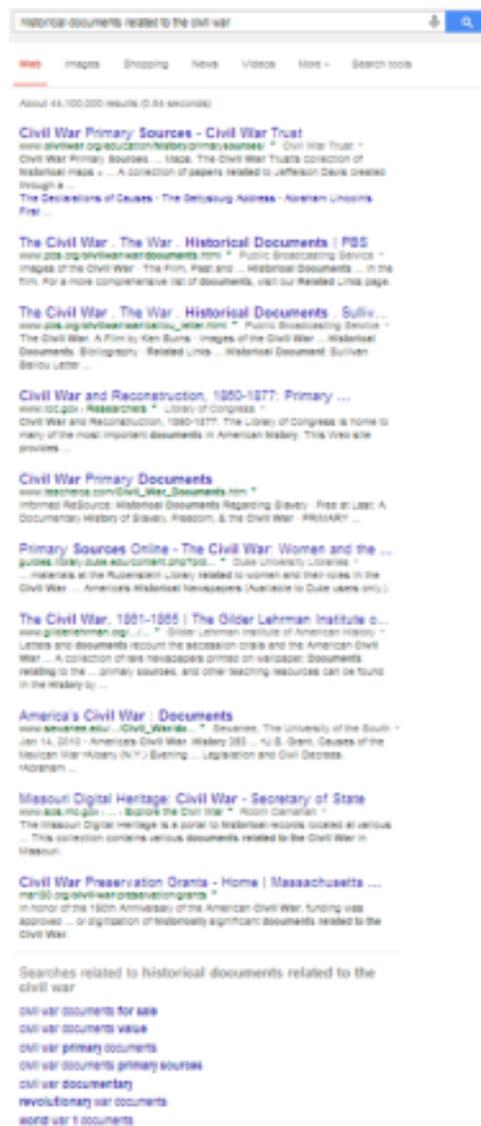
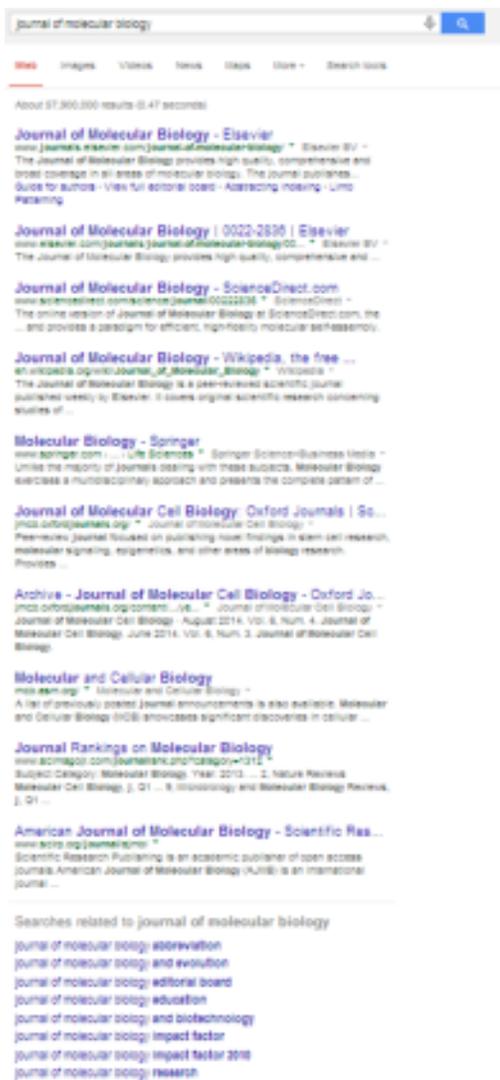
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## Chapter 2: Introduction to Universal Search Results

In the “old days” of SEO, marketers were going after a search results page (SERP) that consisted of “ten blue links.”

This indicated that there were usually ten listings in the organic results, sometimes surrounded by ads.

These *Classic* SERPs still exist today, such as in the following search for “journal of molecular biology” or the slightly less boring “national documents related to the civil war”:



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Current search engine optimization techniques require understanding of far more than just how to influence the rankings of HTML text-content pages. Google is now armed with "Google Suggest," which helps you to fill in your search bar with the most-often-searched terms. Typing in "brit," for instance, leads to a #1 suggestion of Britney Spears, long the #1-searched celebrity on the Internet. Her SERP is a great example of the different **kinds of search results that marketers can and should go after**, which we will cover in this chapter.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "britney spears". On the left, there's a search bar with "brit" and a list of suggestions: "brit - Google Search", "britney spears", "british airways", "british open", "brittany murphy", and "british open results". The main search results page shows "About 40,900,000 results (0.58 seconds)".

**News for britney spears**

- MTV VMAs 2014: Katy Perry Channels Britney Spears and ...** - ABC News (blog) - by Michael Rothman - 11 hours ago. Right before the 2104 MTV Video Music Awards kicked off, Katy Perry brought back fond memories of when Justin Timberlake and Britney ...
- Katy Perry channels Britney Spears at MTV VMAs** - Washington Post - 5 hours ago
- Katy Perry channels Britney Spears at VMAs in iconic denim ...** - Today.com - 11 hours ago

**More news for britney spears**

**Britney Spears**  
[www.britneyspears.com/](http://www.britneyspears.com/) - Britney Spears - 85 Results - The official site. Features a photo gallery, tour information, and news about Britney.

**Britney Spears - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Britney\\_Spears](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Britney_Spears) - Wikipedia - Britney Jean Spears (born December 2, 1981) is an American recording artist and entertainer. Born in McComb, Mississippi, and raised in Kentwood, Louisiana, ...

**Britney Spears (britneyspears) on Twitter**  
<https://twitter.com/britneyspears> - The latest from Britney Spears (@britneyspears), its Britney Bitch! #BritneyJean available now on @iTunesMusic: <http://smarturl.it/britney/jean?IQid=tw>.

**Britney Spears | Facebook**  
<https://www.facebook.com/britneyspears> - Britney Spears, 42013752 likes · 1436915 talking about this. Britney Jean available now on iTunes: <http://smarturl.it/britney/jean?IQid=fb>.

**britneyspears's Profile · Instagram**  
[Instagram.com/britneyspears](https://www.instagram.com/britneyspears) - by Britney Spears - britneyspears. 305 posts; 3165616 followers; 24 following. Follow Britney Spears (its Britney Bitch) <http://www.smarturl.it/peaceofmetix> - Log In - Privacy - Terms.

**Britney Spears News and Photos | Perez Hilton**  
[perez Hilton.com](http://perez Hilton.com) - Britney Spears - Perez Hilton - 7 hours ago - Jason Derulo and Jordin Sparks showed up in a matching outfit and they totally reminded us of Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake back in ...

**Britney Spears | Britney.com**  
[www.britney.com/](http://www.britney.com/) - Britney Spears - Welcome to the official Britney Spears website featuring Britney spears music, Britney Spears lyrics, Britney Spears photos, Britney Spears news and more.

**Britney Spears Las Vegas Show: Piece of Me Live at Pla...**  
[www.planethollywoodresort.com/...](http://www.planethollywoodresort.com/) - Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino - Britney Spears returns in her Las Vegas show, "A Piece of Me." Get your tickets to see the award-winning starlet grace the Axis stage at Planet Hollywood.

**In-depth articles**

- Shooting Britney** - The Atlantic - Apr 2008. "Britney Spears beat up my truck, bald-headed and everything." Dano tells me as we lurk on the Valley side of Mulholland Drive in his silver Ford Explorer, which became famous when ...

**Britney Spears** Artist profile with "Follow" button, "Listen now" button, and music streaming options: Google Play, Rhapsody, Spotify.

**Songs**

Work B4U	2013	Britney Jean
Circus	2008	Circus
I Wanna Go	2011	Femme Fatale
Toxic	2003	In the Zone
... Baby One More Time	1999	... Baby One More Time

**Recent posts**

- Ready for you tonight Vegas! Only question is... Are you ready? - Aug 29, 2014

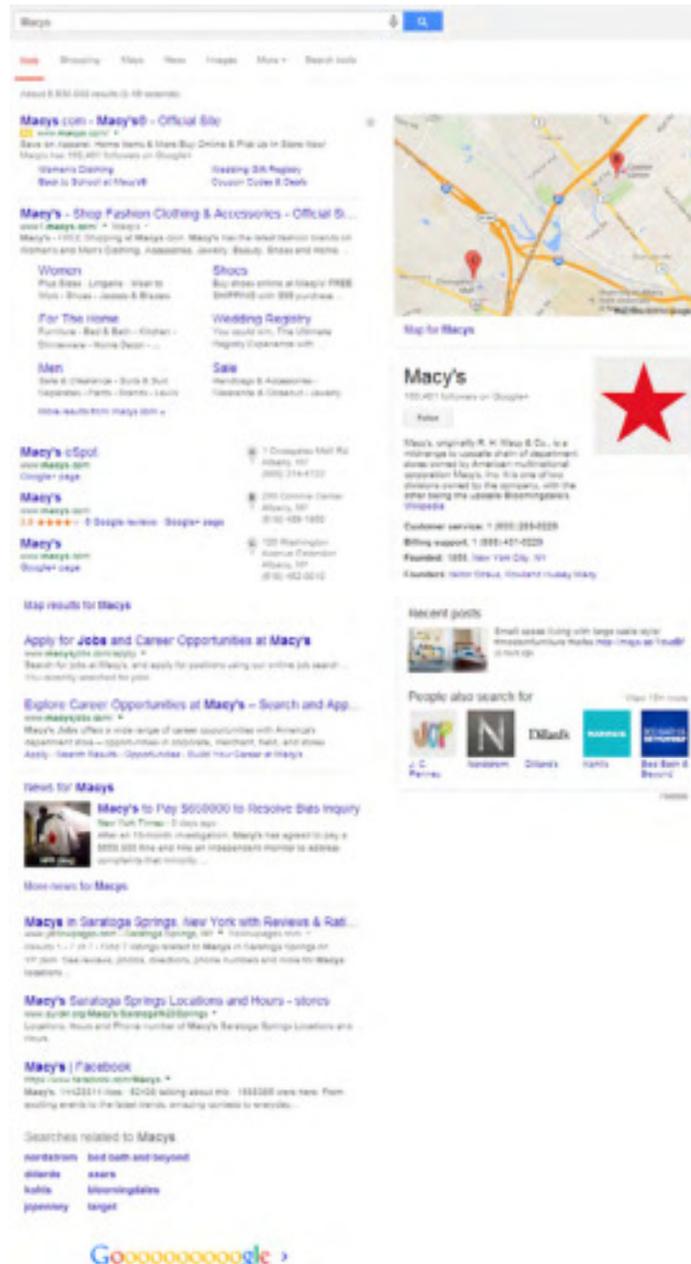
**People also search for**

- Jamie Lynn Spears
- Christina Aguilera
- Lady Gaga
- Madonna
- Miley Cyrus

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## Owning the Brand Results

One must-do for marketers is to own the top page of results for your business name. In this case, you can have your company domain(s) as well as other positive third-party entities that you may also own, such as your social media pages, including your blog, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and even Google +, Pinterest, or others depending on your niche or industry. Macy's provides a great example of "owning" the first SERP for their brand:



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## Owning Personal Results

Your own name can also be an important SERP to monitor, if you are a businessperson or owner. SEO can help you rank for positive content that you own, depending on how popular your name is:

The screenshot shows a Google search for "jim boykin". The search bar contains "jim boykin" and the search button is highlighted. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "Web", "News", "Videos", "Images", "Shopping", "More", and "Search tools". The search results are displayed on the left side, and there are ads on the right side.

**Web** News Videos Images Shopping More Search tools

About 1,300,000 results (0.28 seconds)

**Jim Boykin - Founder/CEO of Internet Marketing Ninjas ...**  
[www.internetmarketingninjas.com/blog/author/jim-boykin/](http://www.internetmarketingninjas.com/blog/author/jim-boykin/)  
 by Jim Boykin - Jim Boykin has been actively involved in SEO and Internet marketing since 1999. Jim's knowledge and experience have made him one of the most respected ...

**Jim Boykin | LinkedIn**  
[www.linkedin.com/in/boykin](http://www.linkedin.com/in/boykin)  
 Clifton Park, New York - CEO, Internet Marketing Ninjas, WebmasterWorld, DeveloperShed, Cre8asiteForums, and Threadwatch.org  
 View Jim Boykin's professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the world's largest business network, helping professionals like Jim Boykin discover inside ...

**Images for jim boykin** Report images

**More images for jim boykin**

**Jim Boykin (jimboykin) on Twitter**  
<https://twitter.com/jimboykin>  
 The latest from Jim Boykin (@jimboykin). Founder and CEO of <http://it.co/> YRH8ztinw, CEO of <http://it.co/erzK3Cme>, Owner of <http://it.co/zCqHp9GX> and owner of ...

**Jim Boykin Interview | SEO Book**  
[www.seobook.com/jim-boykin-interview](http://www.seobook.com/jim-boykin-interview)  
 by aaron wall - Apr 4, 2012 - Internet Marketing Ninja Jim Boykin has promoted link building since before I even knew what SEO was. Nearly a decade later so many things ...

**40 Under Forty: Jim Boykin - Albany Business Review**  
[www.bizjournals.com/albany/.../daily9.ht...](http://www.bizjournals.com/albany/.../daily9.ht...) South Florida Business Journal  
 Jun 16, 2009 - In high school, Jim Boykin thought he would like to be a millionaire. Boykin expected he would do it in business or marketing, or maybe as a ...

**WebmasterWorld Sold To Jim Boykin's Internet Marketin...**

**Ads**

**We Found Jim Boykin**  
[www.peoplesmart.com/](http://www.peoplesmart.com/)  
 1) Get Jim Boykin's Info - Try Free!  
 2) Current Phone, Address & More.

**We Found Jim Boykin**  
[www.spokeo.com/Jim+Boykin](http://www.spokeo.com/Jim+Boykin)  
 See Jim Boykin's Phone, Email, Address, Pics & Profiles—Look Free!

**Jim Boykin Video**  
[www.omreport.com/Jim\\_Boykin\\_Interview](http://www.omreport.com/Jim_Boykin_Interview)  
 Interviews with SEO experts online.  
 View video for free. Learn now!

**Jim Boykin: Found**  
[www.whitepages.com/Jim+Boykin](http://www.whitepages.com/Jim+Boykin)  
 Get Jim Boykin Phone, Address, Photos & more. Quick and Easy!

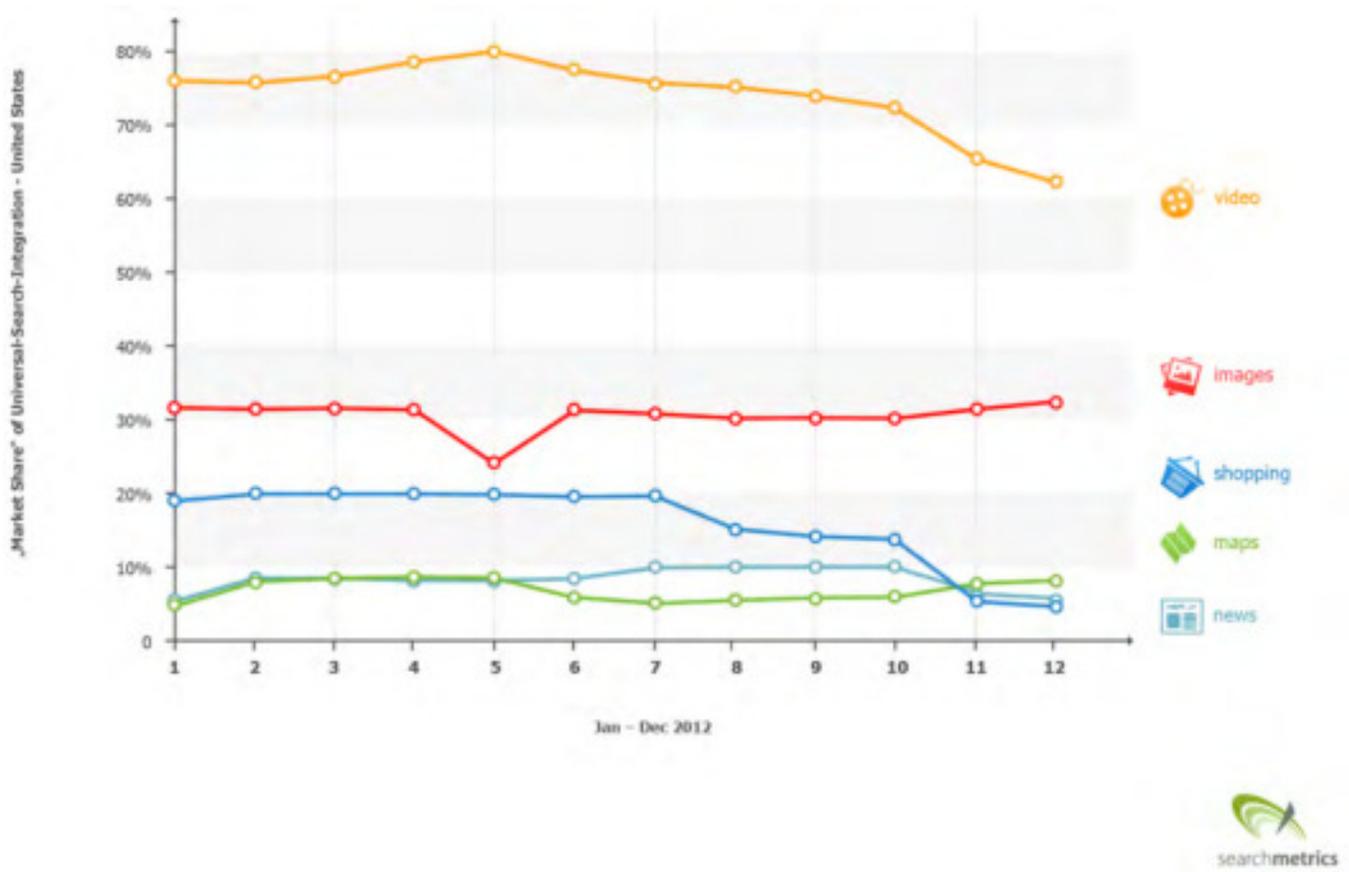
[See your ad here »](#)

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## Universal Search "Inserts"

Often, Google mixes in Universal Search "units" within the *classic* ten blue links. Bing also uses these types of results, and both search engines insert these results based on **searcher's intent**. Classifying searcher intent is an advanced topic, which we will not cover in this basic introduction to SEO, but **simply defined, it involves Google/Bing using information about past searcher behavior to predict the kind of results a human wants to see**. The following are the most common and can be effectively targeted for inclusion in SEO.

In 2013, Searchmetrics released a study showing the following breakdown of Universal Search Results found in Google U.S.:



\*\*\*Note that most Universal Boxes link to a Google category for that type of content (more video, news, images, etc.).

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## Video

Common for “how to” searches as well as for academic content and brand

### Google

**Fix your Briggs & Stratton Powered Lawn Mower for Un...**  
 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPqcbEm5Ka](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPqcbEm5Ka)  
 Aug 15, 2010 - Uploaded by Arizonaperfect  
 Many briggs & Stratton powered lawn mowers are thrown away because of a ... My second video will go ...

**repair briggs & stratton lawnmower tune up ... - YouTu...**  
 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nudneDKz9w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nudneDKz9w)  
 Mar 30, 2013 - Uploaded by TheFlyerDane  
 REPAIR BRIGGS & STRATTON LAWMOWER TUNE UP CARBURETOR CLEAN ... Check out my other ...

**HOW TO REPAIR Lawnmower with BRIGGS & STRATTO...**  
 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsEO6dS0k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsEO6dS0k)  
 Jul 3, 2010 - Uploaded by doryboy73  
 HOW TO REPAIR the PULSA PRIME Carburetor on Lawnmowers with with Briggs & Stratton engines. Visit ...

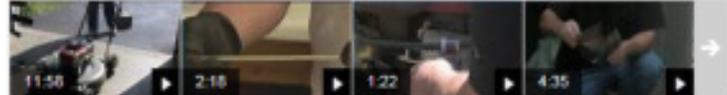
**How To Fix Any Lawnmower Briggs and Stratton 3.0 T...**  
 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HP1mggn1SA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HP1mggn1SA)  
 Jul 15, 2013 - Uploaded by Lostinspace42  
 How To Fix Any Lawnmower Briggs and Stratton 3.0 That Won't Start. Lostinspace42 ... oil to the fill level ...

### Bing

**Lawn Mower Repair : Troubleshooting a Lawn Mower - YouTube**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=r38HhIKR70](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r38HhIKR70)

 By eHow - 416,638 views - Added Jul 13, 2009  
 Common failures of a **lawn mower** include a lack of clean fuel in the gas tank, a spark plug wire that's not attached and a brake cable that's not ...

**Videos of how to fix my mower**  
[bing.com/videos](http://bing.com/videos)



How to fix a lawnmower no s... YouTube  
 How to Repair the Lawn Mower Pul... eHow  
 Lawn Mower Choke Repair eHow  
 Lawn Mower Repair : How to ... YouTube

## News

If a topic is “hot,” this news box tends to move upward in the rankings for both brand- and non-brand-inclusive search terms

### Google

**News for elephants**

 **Seattle Zoo Elephant's Unexpected Death Prompts ...**  
 Huffington Post - 15 hours ago  
 A 45-year-old African elephant's unexpected death at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo has fanned the flames of the ongoing debate about the ...

Death of elephant at Seattle zoo mourned, revives debate  
 The Seattle Times - 1 day ago

Vigil held for euthanized elephant  
 seattletimes.com - 10 hours ago

[More news for elephants](#)

### Bing

**News about Air Disaster**  
[bing.com/news](http://bing.com/news)

**Air Disasters Will Not Stop Travelers From Flying**  
 The Huffington Post - 12 days ago

As a travel agency owner at the time, I will never forget lying in bed on Monday morning, Sept 11, 2001, watching the World Trade Center go down in Manhattan. Clearly, it was one of the worse days of my life. As much as ...

[Full Report: Freckleton Air Disaster remembered 70 years on ITV](#) - 1 day ago

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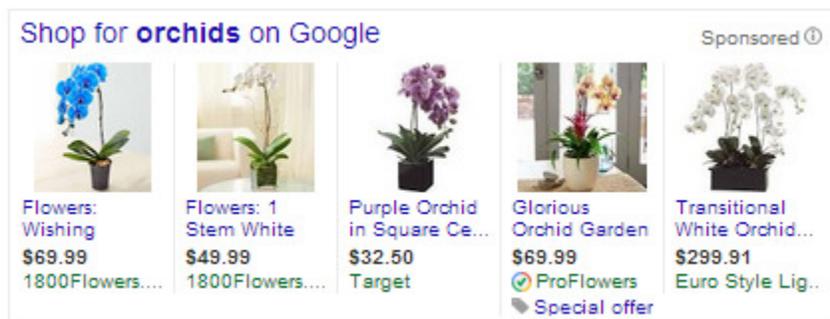
## Images

Many searches lead to user interaction with Google Images results



## Google: Products (Bing Does Not Have This)

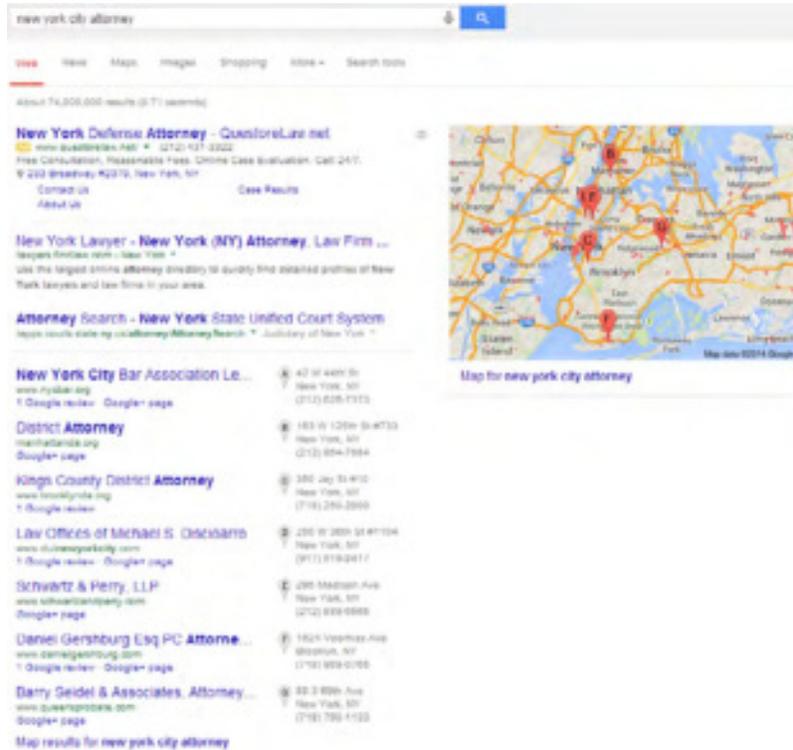
Previously “free” Google Product listings included in the SERPs can also be paid for by advertisers on a per-click basis through Google advertising. These boxes are now most often positioned within the “ad” space, but some examples remain within the organic results, as Google constantly tests to increase click-through rate (CTR), the number of people clicking on the unit as a percentage of the total people exposed to it.



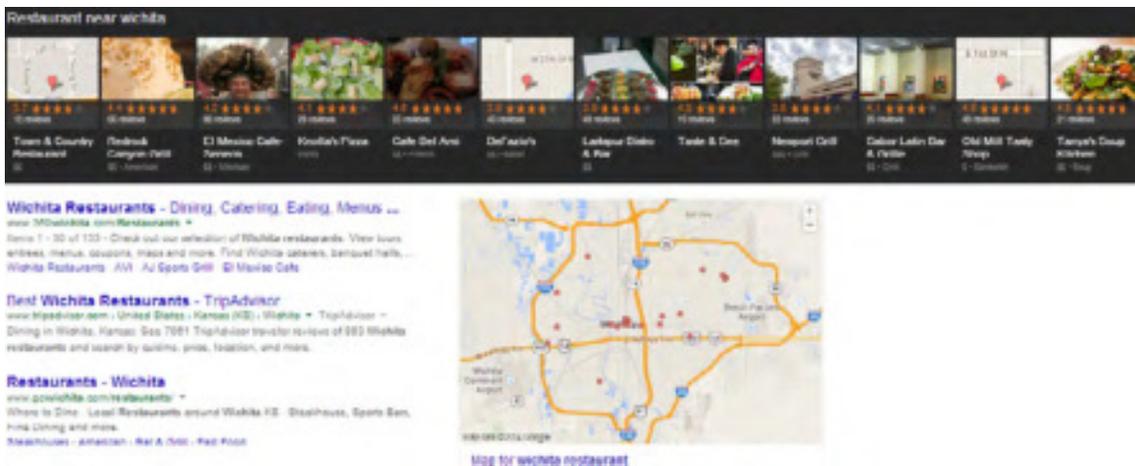
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## Google Local: Maps

Google will present a map and classic "7-pack" of local listings for some types of searches:

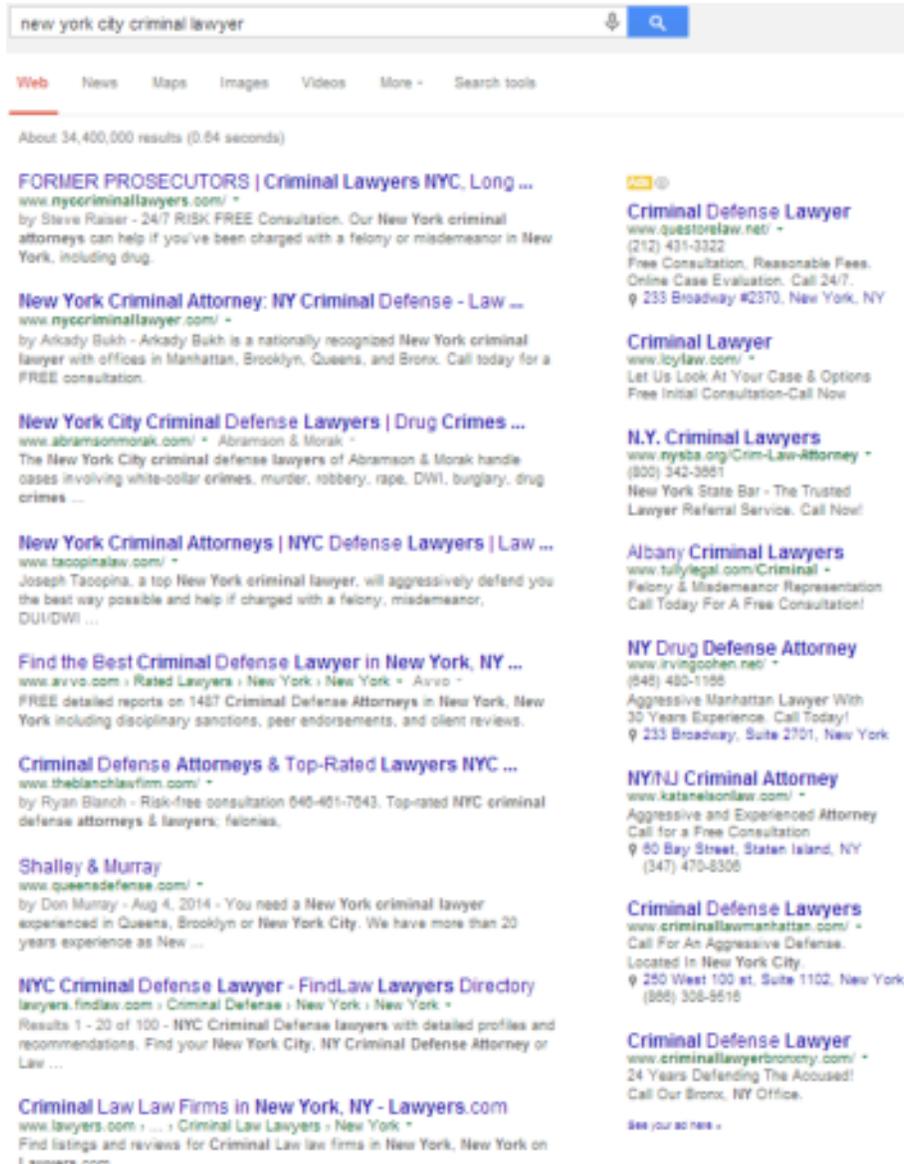


Recently, Google has continued to make changes in the way that it handles local search results. Sometimes, it will list matching establishments at the top of the SERP, such as with restaurants, hair stylists, and other local services. This is known as a **"Local Carousel,"** but many marketers feel it has too many choices, making the job of getting found more difficult.



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Other “local” terms don’t have any map or carousel results, and the SEO’s job is to rank pages for the related terms. These cases provide an opportunity for increased visibility since they are back to “ten blue links,” but typically, the reason Google has removed the usual local results is because Google feels that the particular niche has a tendency to try to cheat the rankings, and this makes it therefore more competitive and harder to rank.



## Universal Search “Big Boxes”

There are a few types of Universal Search results that occupy much more space than those listed above and are always prominently displayed so that the searcher will see them “above the fold” (before scrolling down).

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## Knowledge Graph

The Google Knowledge Graph includes content from trusted sources about a specific brand or person. Often, this content comes from Wikipedia, but other trusted sources exist in the case of doctors, scientists, or government officials, for instance.

A special value of the Knowledge Graph for marketers is that you can use your Google+ account to directly post content within the "Recent Posts" section if you have been verified. This allows for real-time messaging and can be very valuable in times of both positive and negative brand chatter.

Additionally, there are some elements of the Knowledge Graph that can be directly influenced by the use of Rich Snippets (an advanced tagging protocol that is used to support SEO as well as branding, since it helps to strengthen descriptions and accuracy of content). Brands themselves can ensure that their own formal logo is used (as opposed to the logo of Saks Fifth Avenue below, which appears to be cut off). Additionally, other content sources can become part of the Knowledge Graph content, including review-enabled sites, music/video content sites, and other validated authority sites on the subject of the particular brand or person.

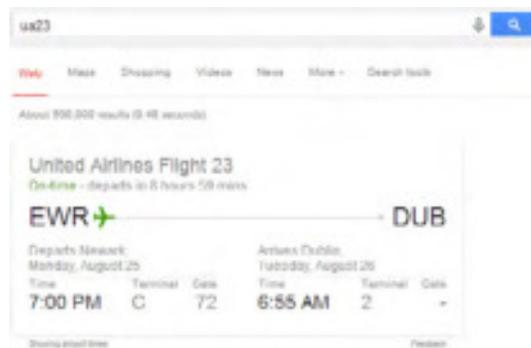
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## Universal Search “Easter Eggs”

There are a number of shortcuts that can lead to additional information being included in a special box right at the top of results. These are often related to timing or score information. Please note that in doing SEO, you should strongly consider what types of searches these types of boxes may appear within and plan accordingly.

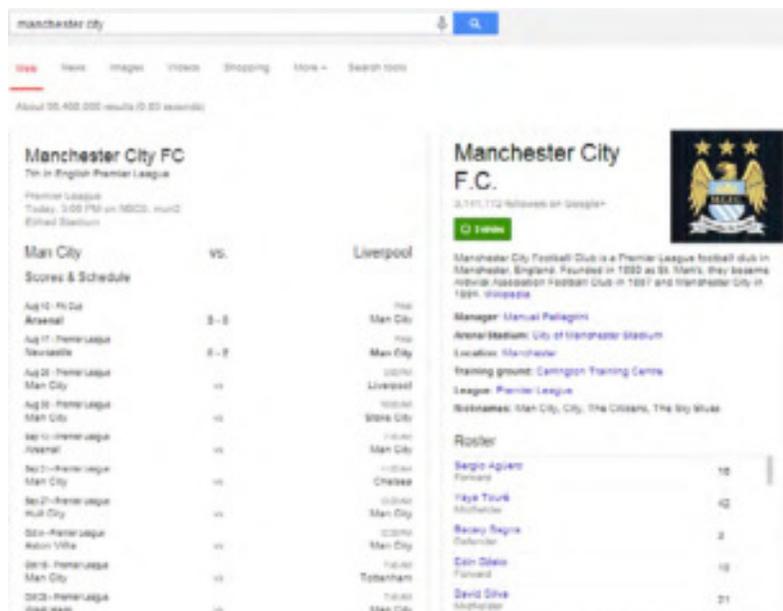
### Flights

Typing in the flight number can provide “on-time” status



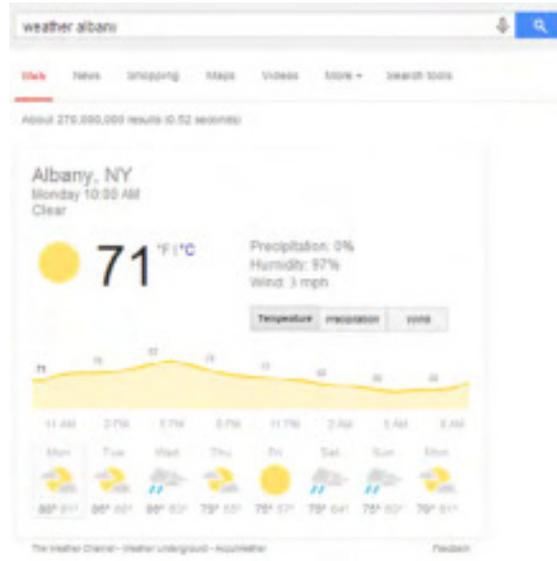
### Scores

Interested to know who won the game or when your team is playing?

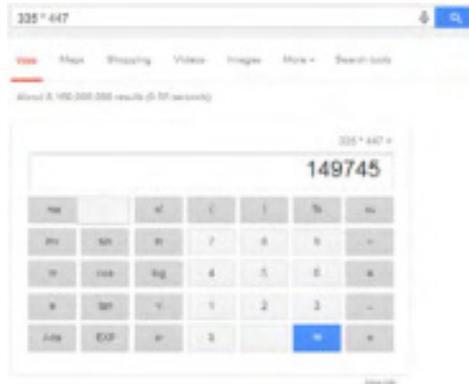


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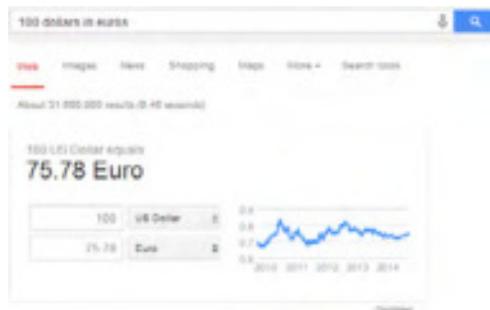
## Weather



## Calculator



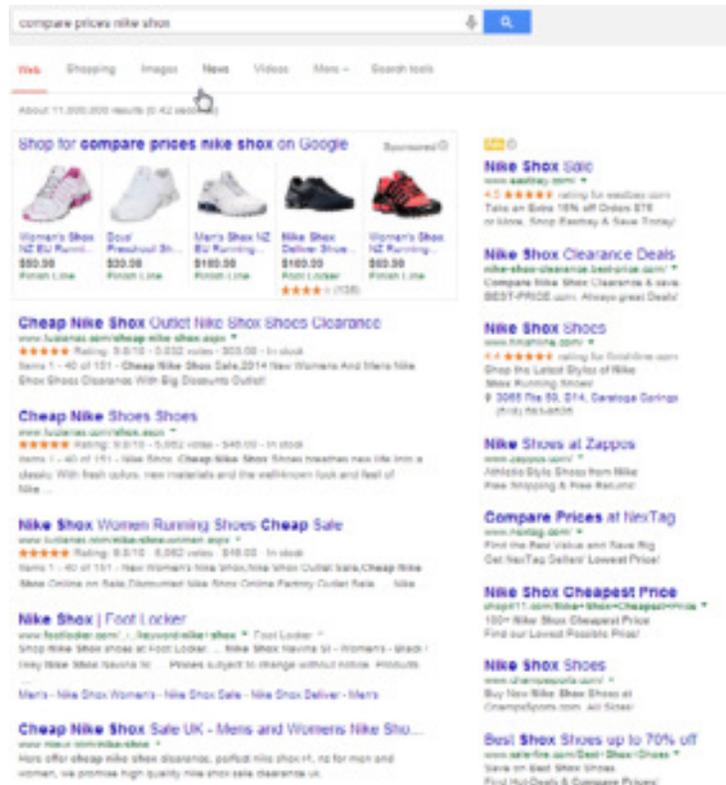
## Currency



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## “Meddling” Google

Some industries feel as if Google is threatening their livelihood by stealing content or replacing the content with their own “selection” of paid listings, especially product comparison engines that have been pushed out by Google in favor of their own product listings and a few brands that have highly optimized their pages:



Examples of Google overstepping boundaries and making some search terms less viable for SEOs include:

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## Air Travel:

Flights from **San Francisco, CA (SFO)** to **Los Angeles, CA (LAX)** Sponsored ⓘ  
[www.google.com/flights](http://www.google.com/flights)

Depart  Return

Nonstop	 Delta	1h 30m	from \$163
	 American	1h 20m	from \$163
	 Virgin America	1h 15m	from \$163
	 Alaska	1h 20m	from \$189
	 United	1h 20m	from \$193
	 US Airways	1h 20m	from \$193
	 Southwest	1h 20m	unknown
All flights	 US Airways	2h 45m+	from \$167
	 Frontier	7h 45m+	from \$568

[More Google flight results >](#)

## Car Sales:

No longer “live,” as Google likely got too much negative feedback from auto dealers:



Thank you for visiting [Google.com/cars](http://Google.com/cars).

The Google San Francisco Bay Area car search beta program has been discontinued as we focus on building the next version of our experience for car-related searches. Stay tuned for more news!

## Conclusion

In 2014 and beyond, marketers have to look at all avenues when it comes to getting content found in search engine results pages. Although HTML-based text content is still the “king” of getting search engines and humans to truly understand your topic and the specific semantic connections to it, other types of content, like images, video, infographics, and more, can help you to stand out from the rest of the competition.

*Google rewards those who create content that is shared and cited, and understanding the true makeup of the SERPs for the terms important to your business is a crucial starting point to long-term SEO success.*

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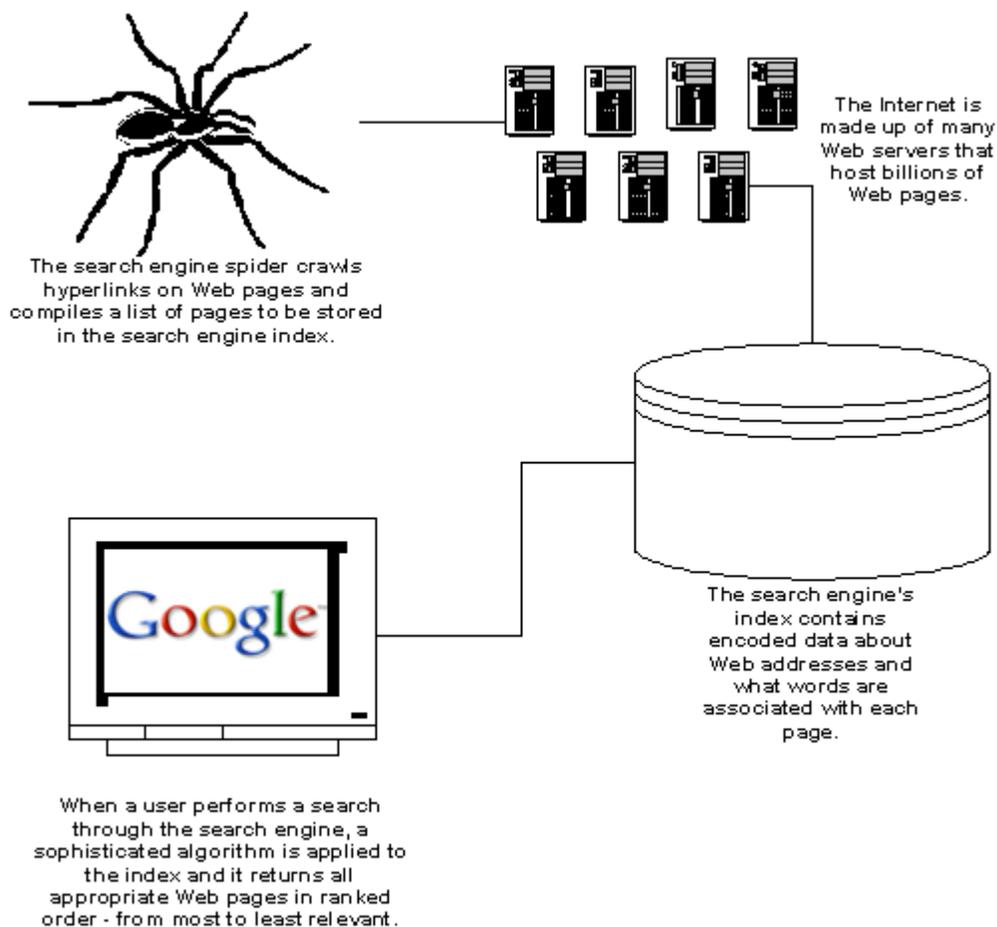
## Chapter 3: How Search Engines Find Content and Return Results

Google and Bing and most other sophisticated search engines accomplish two primary goals:

1. "Crawl" the Internet to index content (text and digital assets) to store in an "index" database
2. Leverage an algorithm to determine which results to return for a searcher's query, based on likely intent of the searcher, content relevance, and content authority

### Crawling the Internet

Google is the largest search engine in the world and has created an index of content found on the Internet with its army of "user agents," also known as "spiders" and "crawlers" and formally known as "Googlebot." Both Google and Bing use "agents" to crawl through the Internet by means of links on Web pages and within the code of digital assets. The following diagram explains this process:



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## The HTTP Process for Search Engines



Currently, the speed at which a site loads for a user (human or crawler) is very important when it comes to SEO. As we will detail further in this e-book, technical SEO also includes helping the site to perform optimally for search engines. “HTTP process” is a technical term for *the things that need to happen in order for one user (human or robot) to “see” the content that is hosted on a website.*

For higher “speed” in this process, there are a few basic elements that SEOs like to consider. For each of the following possible improvement areas, the SEO team/owner may need to negotiate or compromise with the IT, design, or development teams in order to gain ground. *With all technical SEO recommendations, it is extremely important to “play nicely” with IT and understand their limitations based on system/hardware.* Compromises usually end up helping both teams out as well as improving the overall user experience.

Improving the HTTP process for SEO can include:

- Decreasing page load time by removing “heavy” code or optimizing image files and locations and hosting externally
- If using templates from CMS providers like WordPress, using a faster-loading template and plugins to better prepare the site for SEO
  - Other size/speed-focused tools available include gzip compression and cache-controlling plugins

For this basic SEO introduction, the above is about as far as you need to understand in order to research the right topics for your personal situation(s).

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## Using an Algorithm to Return Results

Once the search engine has indexed content, it becomes eligible to be returned in the search results. Google and Bing use an algorithm that is primarily made up of two factors that help to determine if a text or digital asset merits inclusion: relevance and authority. These factors, coupled with a search engine's interpretation of the searcher's intent when performing the search, determine the makeup of the resulting SERP.

1. **Relevance:** This has to do with how close the topic of the content is to the search.
2. **Authority:** Historically, Google invented the first way to determine a Web asset's authority by measuring the amount of links pointed to or "citing" the asset. The more it has, in general, the better the content is, shown by its popularity.
  - a. This has been and continues to be problematic for search engines because of the nature of marketers and their desire to use shortcuts to get to the top of the rankings. More will be covered on this subject later in this e-book.

Note that technical considerations make up part of the algorithms as well, but we cannot really know how important site speed is in the algorithm calculations, especially when compared to the other list of specific content elements that could rank for the specific term, on a case-by-case basis. But we do know that improving a site's technical accessibility does correlate with increased and/or improved rankings.

All of the above information about authority and content relevance will be further discussed in this e-book in greater detail, but first, let's look more deeply at how search engines use their algorithms to rank content

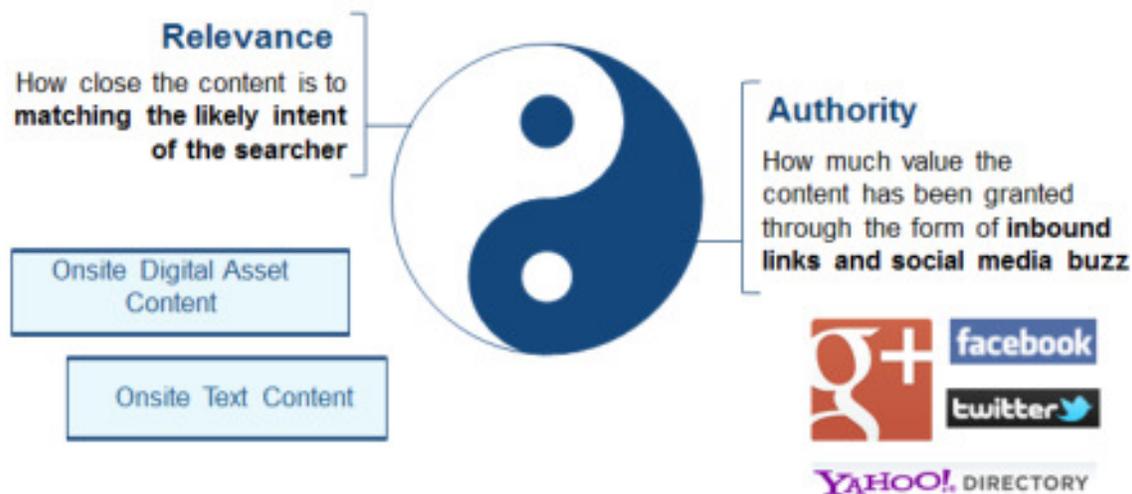
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## Chapter 4: How Search Engines Rank Text Content and Digital Assets

We spoke in the last chapter about the basics of relevance and authority. In this chapter, we will learn more specifically how search engines choose to rank content in returning a search and how the following each come into play:

1. Relevance and authority
2. Content or page “quality”
3. User intent/types of searches
4. The building blocks of SEO

### The High-Level Elements of Ranking: Relevance and Authority



As previously described, content must be relevant to a query in order to be part of the possible list of returned links, and the authority of the content helps to determine how highly it ranks.

1. In some cases, this is easy for a search engine to figure out, such as if someone searches for “auto insurance quotes.” This becomes more difficult to determine for a search engine the broader the term becomes. If someone just searches for “insurance” or “insurance quotes,” part of the information is missing, and therefore, the results set will likely include information for other types of insurance other than automotive.
  - a. It can be especially problematic for search engines if the word has more than one commonly used interpretation, like “windows” for both the computer software and glass windows. Also, it can be difficult if the search is both a brand name and a common search term, like “health insurance quotes,” for example (Healthinsurancequotes.com).

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Using a modifier like “deductibles” changes the landscape of results completely from sales-focused to educational plus a few sales tries.

insurance deductibles

Web News Images Shopping Videos More Search tools

About 5,660,000 results (0.41 seconds)

**Progressive Car Insurance - Progressive.com**  
[www.progressive.com/](http://www.progressive.com/)  
 3.9 ★★★★★ rating for progressive.com  
 Named #1 Car Insurance Website. Get A Free Online Quote Now.  
 Progressive Insurance has 133,330 followers on Google+  
 Renters Quote Auto Quote  
 Motorcycle Quote Boat Quote

How do **deductibles**, coinsurance and copays work? - Blue ...  
[www.bcbsm.com/...insurance...deductibles-coinsurance-copa...](http://www.bcbsm.com/...insurance...deductibles-coinsurance-copa...)  
 This page defines the common terms deductible, coinsurance and copay, and ...  
 This information will help you if you're shopping for health insurance and have ...  
 How to understand ... - How do out-of-pocket ... - What is coinsurance?

**Deductible | HealthCare.gov**  
<https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/deductible/> - HealthCare.gov -  
 The amount you owe for health care services your health insurance or plan covers ...  
 For example, if your deductible is \$1,000, your plan won't pay anything until ...

**Deductible - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deductible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deductible) - Wikipedia -  
 Jump to Auto and property insurance - [edit] In a typical automobile insurance  
 policy, a deductible will apply to claims arising from damage to or loss of the ...  
 Deductible vs. franchise - Deductible vs. excess - Auto and property insurance

HowStuffWorks "How **Deductibles** and Co-pays Work"  
[health.howstuffworks.com/health-insurance/deductible-copay.htm](http://health.howstuffworks.com/health-insurance/deductible-copay.htm) -  
 Deductibles and co-pays are the two basic elements to any health care plan. Learn  
 about the difference between health insurance deductibles and co-pays.

**Deductible Definition | Investopedia**  
[www.investopedia.com/terms/d/deductible.asp](http://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/deductible.asp) - Investopedia -  
 The amount you have to pay out-of-pocket for expenses before the insurance ... into

A search for “windows” returned a paid result on top for glass but a Microsoft subdomain home page including additional links.

windows

Web News Images Shopping Maps More Search tools

About 788,000,000 results (0.50 seconds)

**Windows At Lowe's® - Lowes.com**  
[www.lowes.com/](http://www.lowes.com/)  
 Shop Lowe's® For Top Brand Windows & Stylish Treatments & Save Today!  
**Ratings:** Prices 10/10 - Selection 9.5/10 - Website 9/10 - Returns 9.5/10  
 Lowe's Home Improvement has 566,347 followers on Google+  
 10 Lowe's Drive, Saratoga Springs, NY - (518) 583-3777  
 Lowe's Credit Services Weekly Ads  
 Labor Day Savings Free Shipping \$49+

**Windows - Microsoft Windows**  
[windows.microsoft.com/](http://windows.microsoft.com/) - Microsoft Windows -  
 The official website for the Microsoft Windows operating system. Explore Windows  
 information, get downloads, and find the latest PCs for Windows.

**Downloads**  
 Buy Windows and get free  
 downloads such as Internet ...

**Windows 8.1**  
 The new Windows is here. Get  
 Windows 8.1 now for better ...

**Windows 7**  
 Upgrade to Windows 8.1 - Invalid  
 product key - Fix printer problems  
 More results from microsoft.com >

**Support**  
 Get help, support, and tutorials for  
 Windows products—Windows 8 ...

**Microsoft Windows Update**  
 Latest bug fixes for Microsoft  
 Windows, including fixes for ...

**Windows PCs and Tablets**  
 The new generation of Windows 8.1  
 tablets, laptops, and 2-in-1 ...

## Content Quality

Google and Bing are very vocal about promoting content that is of high quality. Although all major search engines occasional fail and let poor content get through, for the most part, the importance of creating high-quality content has increased over the years. This includes both text content and non-text content, often referred-to as digital assets, such as video, images, infographics, quizzes, and more.

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In short, poor-quality content filled with repetitive text or specific keywords, which used to at one point rank well, will be doomed to fail. Marketers and their SEO side must come to grips with creating good content, even if it seems that they have the most boring industry in the world.

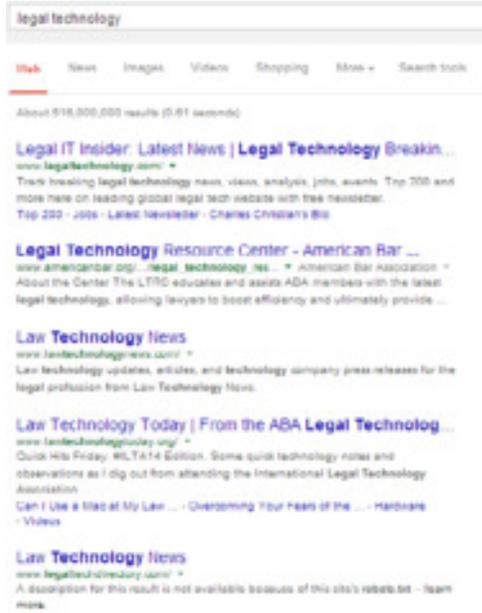
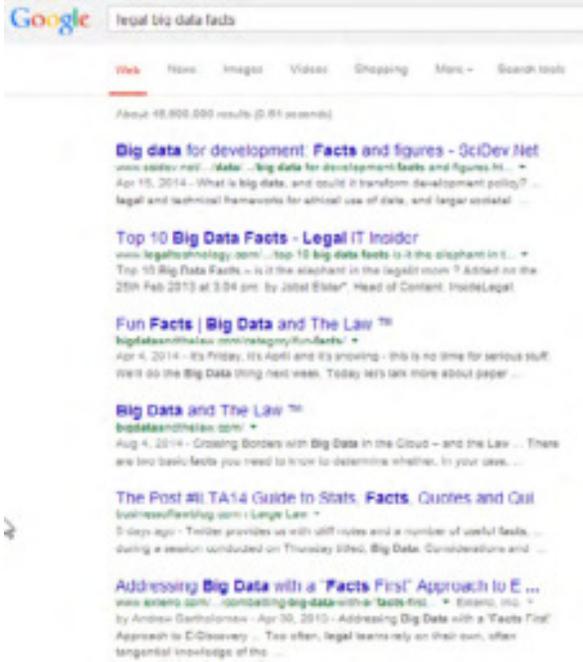
In the following examples, we find a team in Pennsylvania that took its grease-absorbing mats and turned them into “pig gold,” as well as some top ten topics that make legal sites seem cool (to search engines, at least, thanks to the few who get a chuckle out of them and share them online – more on that later!).

Newpig.com uses the pig motif to catch and retain customers and ranks very well for absorbent mats.



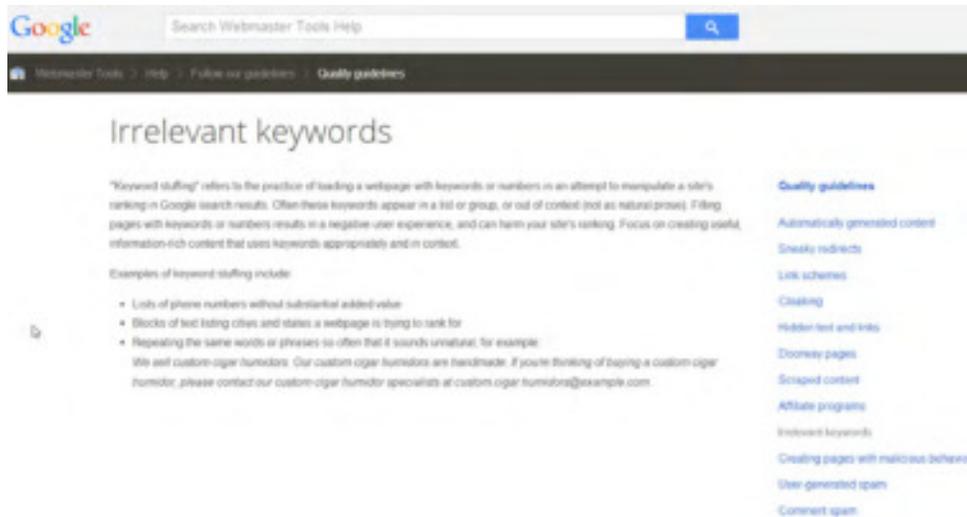
For law sites that focus on “legal technology,” having content such as top ten lists related to industry topics (like Big Data, in this case), could lead to better rankings for key targeted terms.

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Conversely, poor sites that repeat content over and over can no longer perform successfully in search results. Google outlines a number of these types of “poor quality” assets in its Webmaster Tools help section called “Follow Our Guidelines.”<sup>4</sup>

The following is an example of how the “Irrelevant Keywords” page appeared in mid-2014:



<sup>4</sup> [https://support.google.com/webmasters/topic/6001981?hl=en&ref\\_topic=3309300](https://support.google.com/webmasters/topic/6001981?hl=en&ref_topic=3309300)

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## User Intent

Before we outline the basic steps required to “perform” SEO in an ongoing programmatic manner, one more nuance must be discussed in regard to the algorithm: **USER INTENT**

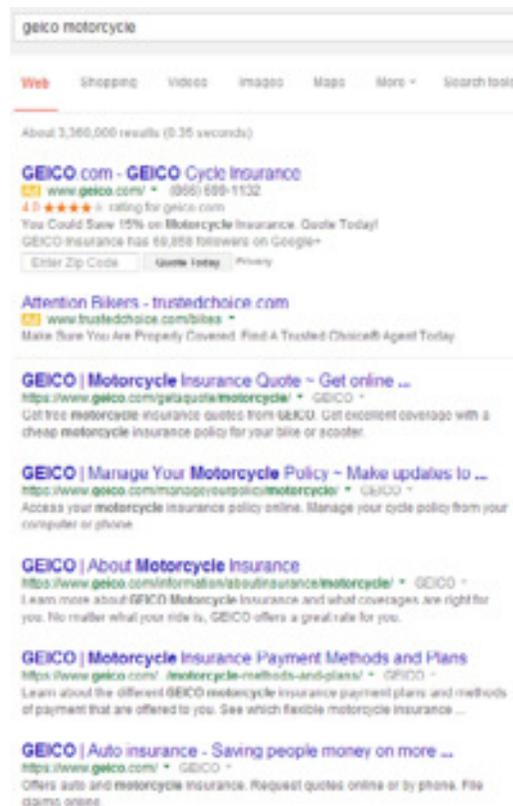
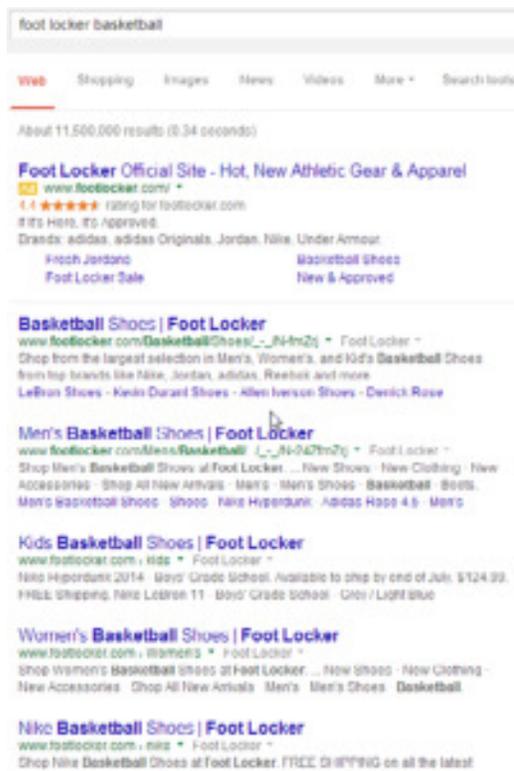
User intent is a complicated factor but has been generally boiled down to the following:

*Most searchers have one of three goals in mind: navigational, informational, or transactional.*

## Understanding “Navigational” Searches

Someone *interested in navigating to a brand* will likely type the brand name and may even add a specific category or service, such as “Foot Locker basketball” or “Geico motorcycle.” In recent years, Google has given more and more “property” to the brand site for term such as this, when in the past, they would give additional links below the first result but allow interlopers into the next above-the-fold spots.

Successful SEOs have to **own their own brand searches**. As is also evident in the screenshots below, many strong brands will buy a paid search ad even for a search that they know will be dominated by their own organic results.



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## Understanding "Informational" Searches

Someone *interested in finding out information about something* will likely perform a number of searches that will become increasingly more detailed. These types of searches make up many of the overall searches and can lead to the user being satisfied with the information they found or to the searcher making a subsequent *transactional* search (discussed below).

Search engines like to think that they are "at their best" when it comes to trying to meet the needs of someone seeking information, and therefore, many informational searches have a variety of universal results. However, recent improvements in computational power touted by Google (including during the Google Hummingbird update) and Bing claim that as a user performs a series of searches, the search engine adapts and begins to take past searches into account. As of this writing, it is nowhere near perfect.

how big was the colosseum arena

Web Images Maps News Videos More + Search tools

About 885,000 results (0.48 seconds)

**Colosseum - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum) • Wikipedia •  
 3.1 Exterior, 3.2 Interior seating, 3.3 Arena and hypocaust, 3.4 Supporting ...  
 The name Colosseum has long been believed to be derived from a colossal statue ...  
 Amphitheatre • Naumachia • Hypocaust • Colosseum of Nero

**Colosseum Arena - Roman Colosseum**  
[www.tribunesandtriumphs.org/colosseum/colosseum-arena.htm](http://www.tribunesandtriumphs.org/colosseum/colosseum-arena.htm) •  
 by Linda Azzim - This content of the article provides interesting history, facts and information about Colosseum Arena. The arena measured 287 ft long and 180 ft wide. The Latin ...

**Description - The Colosseum**  
[www.the-colosseum.net/architecture/description.htm](http://www.the-colosseum.net/architecture/description.htm) •  
 is roughly elliptical in shape, with its long axis, oriented WSW-ESE, which ... Like many amphitheatres, the Colosseum had two entrances to the arena on the ...

**Secrets of the Colosseum | History | Smithsonian**  
[www.smithsonianmag.com/](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/) ... secrets-of-the-colosseum-1582 ... • Smithsonian •  
 During gladiatorial games in the arena, a vast network of man-powered machinery made ... the extraordinary, long-neglected ruins beneath the Colosseum's floor

**Images for how big was the colosseum arena** Report images



More images for how big was the colosseum arena

**Colosseum (arena, Rome, Italy) -- Encyclopedia Britannica**  
[www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/108102/Colosseum](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/108102/Colosseum) • Encyclopedia Britannica •  
 Feb 26, 2014 - Construction of the Colosseum was begun sometime between 70 and 72 ce during ... It has long been one of Rome's major tourist attractions.

**Colosseum - Ancient History - HISTORY.com**  
[www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/colosseum](http://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/colosseum) • The History Channel •  
 Find out more about the History of Colosseum, including videos, interesting articles, pictures, historical features and more. Get all the facts on HISTORY.com.

who won the 1957 rose bowl

Web News Shopping Images Videos More + Search tools

About 840,000 results (0.58 seconds)

The 1957 Rose Bowl was a college football bowl game played on January 1, 1957. In the game, the 43rd Rose Bowl, the Iowa Hawkeyes defeated the Oregon State Beavers by a score of 35-19. Iowa's quarterback Ken Ploen was named the Rose Bowl Player of the Game.

**1957 Rose Bowl - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1957\\_Rose\\_Bowl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1957_Rose_Bowl) • Wikipedia •

**1957 Rose Bowl - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1957\\_Rose\\_Bowl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1957_Rose_Bowl) • Wikipedia •  
 The 1957 Rose Bowl was a college football bowl game played on January 1, 1957. In the game, the 43rd Rose Bowl, the Iowa Hawkeyes defeated the Oregon ...  
 Game summary - Scoring - First quarter - References

**1956 Rose Bowl - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1956\\_Rose\\_Bowl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1956_Rose_Bowl) • Wikipedia •  
 ... not eligible for a bowl game). The Buckeyes were heavily favored to win the Rose Bowl ... a b c d "1957 National Championship". OhioStateBuckeyes.com. Teams - Ohio State Buckeyes - Game summary - References

**1959 Rose Bowl - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1959\\_Rose\\_Bowl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1959_Rose_Bowl) • Wikipedia •  
 The 1959 Rose Bowl was a college football bowl game played on January 1, 1959. It was the 45th Rose Bowl Game. The Iowa Hawkeyes defeated the ...

**The Rose Bowl 1957 - Mmbolding.com**  
[www.mmbolding.com/sports/Rose\\_1957.htm](http://www.mmbolding.com/sports/Rose_1957.htm) •  
 Rose Bowl, 1957. Iowa 35, Oregon State 19. Iowa Fight Song ... When Iowa won the first meeting, 14-13, at Iowa City, Oct. 2, plenty of folks thought the Hawks ...

**Iowa Goes to the 1957 Rose Bowl - YouTube**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8H0AbyCOI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8H0AbyCOI) •  
 Nov 3, 2009 - Uploaded by University of Iowa  
 A half-hour film titled "The Old Gold Rush of 1957: Iowa Hawkeyes in the Tournament of Roses". Originally ...

**Football Bowl Games 1957 - YouTube**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8H0AbyCOI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8H0AbyCOI) •  
 Mar 18, 2011 - Uploaded by History.com's Life

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## Understanding "Transactional" Searches

Someone *interested buying something* will usually perform very specific product or service searches, sometimes accompanied by a brand. For SEO, the transactional search is the Holy Grail. Over the history of the profession, most of the aggressive attempts to cheat the system and gain rankings for high-value terms have been targeted toward searches that have a specific transaction in mind

Transactional terms can be "evergreen" or seasonal. Some are even event-based, and others are driven by pop culture or sudden increases in buzz around a specific product or service-type. The key to understanding which searches are transactional lies in the ability to track visitors to their end purchase and be able to see what keyword they came to the site using. Unfortunately, Google took away the ability for marketers to see the exact keyword through analytics, so now SEOs use third-party tools to track how people search. This topic will be covered later in this e-book.

discount pirelli p6 tire

Web Shopping Images Maps News More + Search tools

About 24,600 results (0.59 seconds)

**Mavis Discount Tire® - Top Tire Brands at Discount Prices**  
 www.mavistire.com/Discount-Tires +  
 4.7 ★★★★★ rating for mavistire.com  
 Will Beat Any Price! See Details.  
 9 145 S Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY - (518) 871-9110  
 Read Tire Reviews \$25 Off Mufflers - Coupon Make Service Reservation Store Locator

**Pirelli P6 Tire - TireRack.com**  
 www.tirerack.com/Pirelli +  
 4.9 ★★★★★ rating for tirerack.com  
 Receive a \$50 Prepaid Card When You Buy 4 Select Pirelli Tires!  
 A+ Rating - Better Business Bureau (BBB)  
 Ratings: Prices 9.5/10 - Selection 9.5/10 - Website 9.5/10 - Service 9/10  
 Shop by Brand - Winter/Snow Tires - Shop by Vehicle - Shop by Tire Size

**Shop for Pirelli P6 Four Seasons Tires Discount Tire**  
 www.discounttire.com/...tires/pirelli/...by/Name.do?...P6... +  
 Size information for Pirelli P6 Four Seasons tires by size, with links to tire reviews.

**Pirelli P6 Four Seasons - Tire Rack**  
 www.tirerack.com + Tires +  
 The P6 Four Seasons radial is Pirelli's Grand Touring All-Season tire originally developed for European high performance and luxury touring sedans imported to ...

**Pirelli P6 4 Seasons Tires - Discounted Wheel Warehouse...**  
 www.discountedwheelwarehouse.com/Pirelli\_P6\_4\_Seasons\_Tires.dfm +  
 Pirelli P6 4 Seasons Tires from Discounted Wheel Warehouse! We have many sizes and styles to choose from, all at Discount Prices. 16 inch, 17 inch, 18 inch, ...

**Pirelli P6 Four Seasons - Discount Tire Direct**  
 www.discounttiredirect.com/direct/tires/pirelli/...by/Name.do?trn=P6... +  
 Discount Tire Direct offers Free Shipping on name brand tires such as Goodyear, Michelin, Nitto, ... Tire Selected: Pirelli P6 Four Seasons Select New Pirelli Tire.

**Pirelli P6 Four Seasons Plus All-Season Tire - 205/50R1...**  
 www.amazon.com / ... / All-Season + Amazon.com +  
 Amazon.com: Pirelli P6 Four Seasons Plus All-Season Tire - 205/50R17 90H Automotive. ... Buy new: \$156.89. \$156.89 + Free Shipping In Stock. Sold by ...

buy pc software

Web Shopping News Images Maps More + Search tools

About 143,000,000 results (1.04 seconds)

**Shop for buy pc software on Google**

				
PaperPort Professional... \$79.99 nuance.com	Microsoft Office 2010 \$94.99 softwareking...	Microsoft Office 2010 \$145.00 Top Soft Deals	My Label Designer Del... \$20.97 Avanzquest So...	Microsoft Publisher 20... \$109.99 softwareking...
★★★★★ (261)	★★★★★ (74)			★★★★★ (78)

**Software PC Games, Operating Systems, Music ... - Best...**  
 www.bestbuy.com + Computers & Tablets + Best Buy +  
 Shop the latest computer games and software at Best Buy. Compare and purchase PC games operating systems and music software that fits your software ...

**Amazon.com: Software**  
 www.amazon.com/design-download...software/b?ie... + Amazon.com +  
 Online shopping from a great selection at Software Store. ... Shop for PC and Mac software including downloads, Small Business Software, Software for Students ...

**Buy Cheap Software - OEM Microsoft Office Software a...**  
 www.buycheapsoftware.com/ +  
 buy CorelDraw X7 Graphics Suite Full Retail 100% guaranteed DOWNLOAD for PC, CorelDraw X7 Graphics Suite Full Retail 100% guaranteed DOWNLOAD ...

**How to Buy Security Software | PCMag.com - PC Magazine**  
 www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2362856,00.asp + PC Magazine +  
 by Neil Rubenking - Apr 26, 2012 - Security software is a must for any internet-connected computer, be it PC or Mac. Some will choose the simplicity of an all-in-one suite, others ...

**Computer Games: Buy PC Games & Computer Gaming ...**  
 www.officemax.com + TECHNOLOGY + SOFTWARE + OfficeMax +  
 Whether you want to buy PC games for educational or entertainment purposes, ... SOFTWARE > GAMES & ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE (14 MATCHES).

**Newegg.com - Computer Parts, Laptops, Electronics, and ...**  
 www.newegg.com/ + Newegg +  
 Providing computer parts and hardware, hard drives, cameras and software as ... Newegg.com - A great place to buy computers, computer parts, electronics, ...

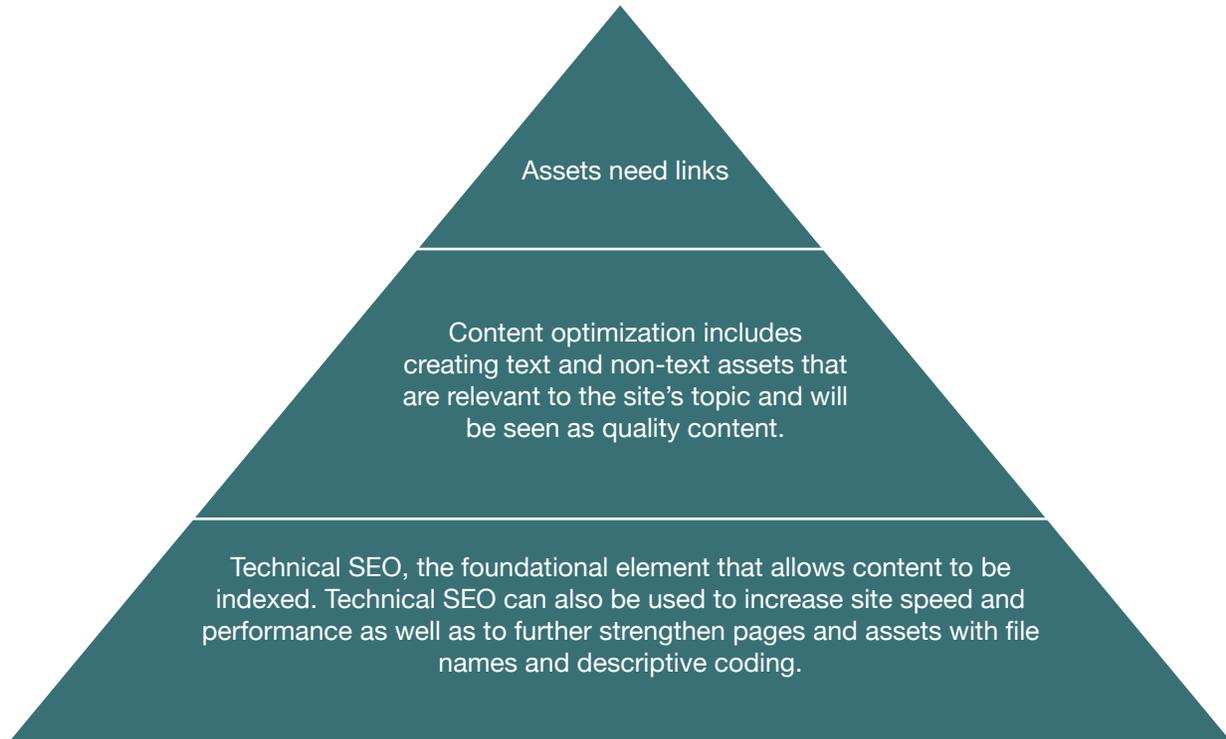
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## Basic SEO: Technical, Content, and Linking

Over the years, search engine optimization has been about three things:

1. Getting content indexed = Technical SEO
2. Optimizing the content for relevance as well as appearance within the search results = Content or "on-page" SEO
3. Getting authority pointed to the content = Brand links and social mentions

Some SEOs look at this as a silo or hierarchical relationship toward a common goal of increased visibility within results pages for terms that are navigational, informational, and, most importantly, transactional.



In the upcoming chapters, we will look more closely at each of the above areas. [Please subscribe to the updates.](#)

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